

536.1
Y275

SPEECH
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
Urbana

HON. RICHARD YATES, OF ILLINOIS,

OF

ON

THE LAND POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES, AND IN DEFENSE OF THE WEST,

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 23, 1852.

WASHINGTON:
PRINTED AT THE CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE OFFICE.
1852.

336.1

4275

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

2. Apr. 11. 1892.

LAND POLICY—DEFENSE OF THE WEST.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the bill "to encourage agriculture, manufactures, commerce, and other branches of industry, by granting to every man who is the head of a family, a homestead of one hundred and sixty acres of land out of the public domain, upon condition of occupancy and cultivation of the same, for the period herein specified"—

Mr. YATES said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I shall endeavor, in the few remarks which I shall make upon this occasion, to confine myself chiefly to the subject legitimately before the committee. The consideration of this bill very properly invites discussion, as to the whole land policy of the Government. Whether the present policy as to the public lands is to be continued, or whether Congress shall adopt a new policy, are questions which are now occupying a large share of the attention of Congress, and of the country. In the attempt to present my views upon this question, I am aware that nothing short of the presidential question seems to awaken the interest of the committee, and I almost shrink from the effort to arrest its attention, by remarks upon the appropriate business and practical questions which it is our duty, as legislators, to investigate.

The constitutional power of Congress to make grants of lands to actual settlers, or to the States, for the construction of railroads, has been denied by most of the gentlemen who have addressed the committee against these propositions. I do not propose to discuss the question of constitutional power at length. If a question can be settled by precedent, then I think that the right of Congress to make these grants may be considered a settled question. When the propriety of such grants first came before Congress, the question of constitutional power underwent a thorough discussion. The greatest minds in the country were pitted against each other, and I believe the power to make the grants was finally conceded by nearly all. Most certainly, it has been repeatedly exercised without being called in question. Grants for purposes of education, to asylums, to actual settlers, and for the promotion of internal improvements, have been made at sundry times, beginning with the administration of Washington, down to the present day. When we have the opinions of such men as Mr. Clay and Mr. Webster, General Cass and Mr. Douglas, and nearly all the leading men of both parties, and especially the opinions of the strict constructionists of the Constitution, including Mr. Calhoun, who was ever jealous of the exercise of any doubtful constitutional power; I say when we have such an array of authority in

favor of this constitutional power, added to the uniform practice of the Government, and enforced by the legislation of almost every Congress, it would seem that this might well be considered a settled question. I do not say that precedent is everything, but I do say that the opinions of our profoundest statesmen and lawgivers, expressed after mature deliberation, are entitled to high consideration.

The arguments against the exercise of this power, relied upon by gentlemen who have addressed the committee, are presented in their strongest light in the National Intelligencer of this morning, and I will call the attention of the committee to the two strong points taken in that paper, and which I do not consider well taken. That paper says:

"The property of 'the people of the United States,' whether it is money in the Treasury or the public lands, cannot be rightfully used by those who govern our affairs, unless it is done 'in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.'"

Now, if it can be shown that the passage of this bill will accomplish any of these objects, then the "public lands may be rightfully used for these grants to the objects indicated." Now I submit to this committee the question, Is it not for the "GENERAL WELFARE" to promote the settlement of the public lands? Is it not for the general welfare to establish an independent yeomanry upon our broad and beautiful public domain of one thousand four hundred million acres of land? Is it not for the GENERAL WELFARE that we encourage the agricultural productions of the country and improve the condition of our industrious poor? Is it not for the GENERAL WELFARE to discourage speculation in the public lands, to fell the forest, to make "the wilderness bloom and blossom as the rose," and to cover that mighty area of territory extending from the Ohio river to the Pacific ocean, with a population of independent freeholders, and to withdraw population from the temptations and vices of crowded cities to the purer atmosphere of rural life.

The same paper says:

"A title by 'actual settlement' is absurd, unless legal policy may thus encourage hardy pioneers to enter the forest and plant the footsteps of civilization in its dark recesses. With this view, however, what are called 'pre-emptions' may be justly favored and protected."

The constitutionality of granting preëmptions is not denied by any. The consideration upon which

they are granted is to encourage settlement. Is it not the same "*legal policy*" to encourage that settlement by making grants to the actual settler? Under the preëemption system, the settler often has the privilege of buying, to the exclusion of all others, land at \$1 25 per acre worth ten times that sum. He can enter upon the public lands as soon as they are surveyed, and before they are offered at public sale, and purchase the same at the Government price, though at the sale others might be ready and willing to pay five times that sum. If the Government may thus surrender its rights to promote settlement, may it not, for the same object, grant lands worth \$1 25 per acre, or less, to the actual settler? The principle is the same in both cases. It is the same in grants of bounty lands to the soldier, and when the "*legal policy*" is admitted in the one case, it cannot be denied in the other.

I call the attention of gentlemen to that article of the Constitution which provides that "Congress shall have power to dispose of, and make all needful rules and regulations respecting, the territory or other property of the United States." "It shall have the power to *dispose of*"—here is an unlimited power. It is not derived by construction or implication—it is an EXPRESS power. The manner of this disposition, and the objects of the appropriation, are of course to be left to the discretion of Congress.

Mr. Chairman, it is amusing to see how certain gentlemen can find authority to make appropriations to some objects, and at the same time deny any power to make appropriations for other objects of precisely the same character. The gentleman from New York, [Mr. JENKINS,] in his speech, maintained that our rivers were very properly the objects of national concern, and that appropriations for their improvement were legitimately within the power of Congress, but stoutly denied that Congress had any power to make grants of either money or lands for the construction of railroads. *These*, he says, are the objects of State concern exclusively. Now, here is a "distinction without a difference." The only difference is, that the one is water, the other iron. The object of both is to facilitate intercourse between the different portions of the Confederacy. Certainly communication by means of railroads is more direct; it is cheaper, safer, and speedier. All the operations of commerce, and all the objects of such a grant, can be as well or better carried out by the construction of railroads than by the improvement of rivers, and therefore I can see no objection to grants of lands to the State to aid in their construction.

EXTENT OF PUBLIC DOMAIN.

There are several specific propositions before Congress—the bill now pending, granting lands to actual settlers; the bill granting 10,000,000 of acres to the States to be applied to the relief of the indigent insane; and various bills granting alternate sections of the public lands for the construction of railroads. I am in favor of the principle contained in all these propositions. I speak not of the details of these bills. If wrong in detail, when the time arrives for their consideration they can be amended to obviate objections. I am surprised that some of the advocates for grants to actual settlers, and for the relief of the insane,

seem to regard railroad grants as coming in conflict with them. Why, sir, nothing can be further from the fact. There is no conflict. There are enough lands for all. They cannot and will not be exhausted for a thousand years to come. The following table will show the quantity of public lands, sold and unsold, the proceeds of sales, and the grants and reservations of the same for all purposes, up to the 30th September, 1851:

Sold	101,633,930	acres.
Grants for schools, &c.....	40,558,978	"
For Deaf and Dumb Asylums.....	44,971	"
For internal improvements.....	11,500,395	"
To individuals and companies.....	279,792	"
For seats of government, &c.....	50,860	"
For military services.....	16,019,065	"
Reserved for salines.....	422,325	"
Reserved for benefit of Indians.....	3,400,725	"
Reserved for companies, corporations, &c.	8,955,383	"
Confirmed private claims.....	7,123,903	"
Swamp lands granted to the States.....	27,397,260	"
Central railroad grant.....	3,025,920	"

Total of acres unsold and unappropriated, of offered and unoffered lands on the 30th September, 1851, 1,399,586,140.53 acres.

It appears from this table, that in a period of seventy years only 101,633,930 of acres have been sold, and that the Government still has on hand a mighty domain of over thirteen hundred millions of acres. Is here not an ample fund for all the purposes of education, for the relief of the insane, for homes to the actual settler, and for the purposes of internal improvement?

GRANTS FOR RELIEF OF INSANE.

Mr. Chairman, much as I desire to see portions of the public lands appropriated to internal improvements, yet this is not the chief measure with me. In my humble estimation, the first and most desirable application of the public domain, is to make ample provision for the insane, the deaf and dumb, and the blind. The Government could not make a more useful application of a portion of the public domain, than by assisting each State and Territory to endow an institution for each of these objects. The census of 1840, in a total population of 17,069,453 persons in the United States, exhibited an insane population of 17,457; and the census of 1850 in a total population of 23,267,498, gave an insane population of 27,000. The increase of the victims of insanity, is in a ratio far greater than the increase of the whole population. But, sir, the results of proper medical treatment in institutions established for this purpose have been most gratifying. Thousands who were considered hopelessly insane have been restored to reason, and there is every reason to believe that the frightful increase of this dread malady may be in a great measure stayed, if proper relief is afforded.

The grants in favor of these objects, should be munificent, and such as, with the aid of the States, would place these institutions beyond the contingency of want. These grants are not contended for on the ground maintained by certain political economists of France, that it is the duty of the Government to furnish direct subsistence to the people, and which has led her impulsive population to clamor for Government aid, instead of relying upon the surer rewards of honest industry and persevering labor. It is upon the higher principle of duty to the children of misfortune, who, by the inscrutable decrees of an overruling Provi-

dence, are deprived of the ability to procure means of support or education. There comes to us, sir, an appeal from these unfortunate classes of our population addressing itself to the kindest sympathies, the noblest impulses of the heart, as well as to the highest considerations of patriotism. Yes, sir, from the dethroned intellects of the twenty-seven thousand maniacs in the land, the stopped ears of the deaf and dumb, from the sightless eyeballs of the blind, closed forever to the beautiful frame-work of art and nature, by which we are surrounded, comes this appeal.

No longer needing the public lands as a source of revenue, some statesmen of great eminence have regarded their possession as a curse, rather than a blessing. But this depends upon the uses to which they are applied. If our public domain is discreetly applied, it will be an exhaustless fountain of blessedness to the people. And, if Congress will look at it aright, and will grant to the States a sufficient quantity of these lands to endow these institutions, and to place the means of relief within the reach of these sad children of misfortune, it will have accomplished one of the noblest and most sacred objects in the sight of God or man. Much is said about progress, but this is a sort of progress which will prove incontestably the christian enlightenment of the age, and bind new and bright glories around the brow of the Republic. It may be a weakness in this business age of finance, steam, and railroads, a *sickly sentimentality* perhaps; yet I confess that for appropriations for these sacred objects is my first desire, and I would rather see all the projects for grants of the public lands fail than these. I would have each State, by the aid of these lands, erect a magnificent edifice, with comfortable and spacious apartments, adorned with the decorations of art and every pleasing embellishment; surrounded by large inclosures of forest tree, beautiful shrub, and blooming flower. So that if your wife, or daughter, or mine, should ever fall victims to insanity, (and it is a calamity to which all are liable,) instead of being confined within narrow apartments and prison-houses, she may walk forth in the light of God's glorious sun, breathe Heaven's pure air, and, if her fancy choose, pluck a flower by the wayside.

Sir, that page of history which shall record, that the American Congress, in the year 1852, made ample provision for these sacred objects, will be an *immortal* page. And when noble edifices for these objects are erected, and these institutions are firmly established, they will redound to the lasting honor of the Congress which made the appropriation, and will be pointed to by our children and children's children from generation to generation, as the proudest monuments of the glory of the nation.

I cannot here forbear to refer to the fact, that the State of Illinois, in addition to her tax for the support of the Government, and in addition to her separate tax for the payment of the public debt, with a spirit worthy of her people, imposed a separate tax for the relief of her insane and the education of her blind and deaf and dumb. And perhaps three nobler edifices are not to be found in any State than those which she has erected—the pride of every citizen, the admiration of every stranger, and the glory and delight of every patriot and Christian. Sir, what must be the pleasure with which every citizen of Indiana and Illinois

reads the following tribute from Miss Dix, the great philanthropist of the age, and the illustrious benefactress of her race. She says:

"Look at Indiana—noble, clear sighted Indiana. She adopted a wise and noble policy, equally prudent and humane, and levied a special tax for the insane, for the deaf mutes and the blind within her borders, at a cost of more than \$200,000." "There, in that young State, almost within the shadow of her capitol, stand these monuments of a Christian and enlightened age, recording a forethought and munificence which, under the circumstances, has no parallel; though Illinois, ranging side by side geographically, almost completes a corresponding page in her history."

The above extract is taken from her memorial to the Legislature of Maryland. And, in justice to my State, I may say that the expenses already incurred by the State of Illinois for these objects exceed considerably the sum of \$200,000. Now, sir, when it is considered that both these States, and many others, are embarrassed by heavy debts, and that all the States are taxed to the utmost of the ability of the people to bear, it will be seen that this aid from the public lands would be most timely and appropriate, and of the greatest importance.

GRANTS TO ACTUAL SETTLERS.

Mr. Chairman, I shall not go into the discussion at length of the bill under consideration. I have for many years entertained opinions favorable to grants of the public lands in limited quantities to actual settlers. But I humbly conceive that those advocates of this bill, who oppose grants for railroads are much in error; for it is only by opening roads through the public lands, and making them accessible to market, that they are to be made *desirable homes* for the actual settler.

A better illustration of the effects of the present land system could not be given than the declaration which has been made by the gentleman from New York [Mr. SUTHERLAND] to this committee. He says that he knows, at his boarding-house, four individuals, who own 50,000 acres, each, of the public lands. I would ask that gentleman, if that system is to be considered beneficial, which tolerates the withholding of these lands from settlement and occupation in the hands of wealthy speculators, to the exclusion and injury of the poor and industrious citizens? Would it not be better to have these lands in cultivation, divided into small farms, and occupied by our industrious poor families, than for them to remain unimproved, and absorbed entirely by speculators? Is that a just system which permits the wealthy speculator, who makes no improvements, to hold on to these lands until the actual settler, by the improvement of adjacent lands, has made them valuable, and then to charge him five times the Government price for them?

The only plausible objection to the policy of these grants to actual settlers, which at first struck me, but which, I believe, has not been advanced here, was, that the effect would be to depreciate the lands in the hands of present proprietors. But the reverse, I believe, will be the effect. The class of persons, who would go on a quarter section and occupy and cultivate it for five years to get a title thereto, would be in the main poor persons, and unable to buy of present proprietors. I doubt, sir, whether it would make a single purchaser less. The bounty land laws, which have absorbed 16,019,065 acres, have not had the effect to reduce

the prices of lands already occupied and improved. The effect, I think, would be to increase prices to present owners, by bringing into settlement and improvement the public lands which would otherwise remain in market for sale, and which now come into competition with the lands of present owners. The prices of lands in the hands of present owners, are unquestionably kept down by the large quantity of the public lands which are subject to sale at \$1 25 per acre—purchasers being unwilling to pay from five to twenty dollars per acre for improved lands, when they can get them at the Government price.

The new States have a deep and vital interest in the passage of this bill. They want settlement. They want these lands to pass out of the hands of the Government into the hands of individuals, so as to make them taxable, and contribute their share to the support of the State governments. The passage of this bill would increase greatly the immigration to the land States, insure the settlement and improvement of the vacant lands, and augment the capital of the new States, which they so much need to enable them to engage in manufacturing, the construction of roads, and other important public enterprises.

The General Government would lose nothing—the settlement and improvement of portions of the public lands would increase the value of the contiguous lands remaining unoccupied, and would add vastly to the aggregate of agricultural production and national prosperity.

But, sir, the highest consideration is the effect which it would have to raise to independence, and to elevate a large portion of our fellow-citizens who gain a hard, scanty, and uncertain subsistence from the earnings of daily labor, or who, in the dependent relation of tenants, pay one third or one half of the proceeds of their labor to the owners of the soil.

I cannot forbear to quote, in favor of the passage of this bill, the very extract which the gentleman from New York [Mr. JENKINS] has quoted against it:

“DESTITUTION IN PHILADELPHIA.—The Philadelphia American gives an account of a visit made a few days ago to the hovels of many of the poor and destitute of that city, who live in small unventilated rooms, for which they are compelled to pay ten cents rent each day. It is supposed the number of these unfortunate beings is about five thousand. Many of them were found with their hands and feet frozen for want of fuel to keep them warm, while others had even disposed of most of their scanty clothing to buy bread. In one cellar a family were found who had been turned out of home because they were unable to pay their rent. In another place, a poor miserable woman and several children were found in a shed, the children covered up in a heap of ashes to keep them warm. Having no clothing whatever to cover them, the mother had been driven to this resort to keep them from freezing. The clothes had been sold to buy bread.”

Now, sir, the gentleman is most unfortunate in making this quotation. If he had labored for months, he could not have presented a more forcible argument in favor of the bill. Pass this bill, and a strong inducement will be presented to every one who is destitute of the means of support, and who has industry, to fly to the public lands; and instead of five thousand persons in unventilated rooms, and in a state of destitution, in the city of Philadelphia, we will, in a few years, have as many independent landholders in the Western States in the full enjoyment of all the blessings of life.

Representatives from the West will bear me out

in the assertion I am about to make. There are thousands of tenants in the Western country with large families, who are unable to make a dollar over and above the amount required for the support of themselves and families, after paying to the owners of the soil one third of the proceeds of their annual labor. How much ameliorated would their condition be, if they had their own soil to cultivate—homes of their own, and the exclusive enjoyment of the hard earnings of their daily labor? Secure to the industrious poor man a home of one hundred and sixty acres of rich and productive land, and you attach him to the country. You give him a new and certain interest in the soil. He is then a freeholder, a proprietor of his own broad acres. His interest is identified with the Government and society. He pays taxes; he takes an interest in schools and churches, roads and bridges, and in the voice of the ballot-box. He feels like a man, and he is then, in the full sense of that proud appellation, *an American citizen*. For these, and numerous other considerations, I hope this Congress will decide, that out of the 1,400,000,000 unsold acres of the public domain, *every* family, every poor and homeless American citizen, may find *a home*—a home, sir, which he can call his own—his castle of strength, where, secure beneath his humble roof and around his own fireside, “he can worship God beneath his own vine and fig tree, none daring to molest or make him afraid.”

GRANTS OF LANDS TO ILLINOIS.

Much has been said in the progress of this debate about the grants to Illinois. While the twelve land States are denounced by the gentleman from New York as playing a “grab game in the struggle to see which could get the largest share,” and are denounced as *land stealers*, Illinois unfortunately is looked upon as, par excellence, the *biggest land thief of all*. Her good fortune in securing liberal grants, has caused her to be regarded with a sort of *maliciousness*, which she in nowise merits, and which are by no means justified by the facts of the case. What was the principle upon which Congress appropriated alternate sections of the public lands to aid her in the construction of her Illinois and Michigan Canal and the Central Railroad? Did the United States make them without an equivalent? Did Illinois claim them as a charity, or for her exclusive benefit? No, sir; very far from it. The grants were made upon higher considerations than mere benefit to Illinois—considerations of the general welfare and national prosperity. The State occupied the relation of trustee or agent to the General Government to appropriate the lands to the construction of works of acknowledged national importance, and in such a way as to present inducements for the sale and occupancy of her other wild lands which had never before existed. These works were essential links in a great national highway extending from the ocean to the gulf, and affecting in a high degree the interests of one half the States of the American Union. Take the map of the United States and look at it. From Portland, in Maine, from New York and all the Eastern cities, by various routes to Lake Erie, across that lake to Detroit, thence to New Buffalo, thence across Lake Michigan to Chicago, thence by the canal and Illinois river, or Central Railroad, to Cairo, and through the States of Kentucky,

Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama to Mobile, a distance of one thousand eight hundred miles! Why, sir, the world in all its past history has not seen such a route. Here, sir, is the greatest highway of ancient or modern times. The Roman ways were the pride of the people in the days of Roman power; but they dwindle into insignificance compared with this mighty track of the iron horse. It was not for Illinois alone, but for the nation that these grants were made. The State of Illinois was the mere crossing-place for the States of the Union.

But what has the Government lost by her grants of land to Illinois? The lands along the line of the Central Railroad had been in market exposed to sale at the land offices for twenty-five years, and on account of their remoteness from market and destitution of timber were likely to remain unsold for half a century more. They came under the denomination of *refuse* lands, and belonged to that class which at a former session of Congress were proposed to be ceded to the States in which they were situated, to enable the Government to dispense with the expensive machinery of land offices and other expenses, which cost the Government more than the revenue derived from their sale. Sir, it would not take long to convince any gentleman on this floor, who would go along the route of the Central Railroad, that the Government, as a great landholder, had adopted the most effectual means of imparting value to her lands and bringing them into market, and that, while doing this directly, she had *indirectly* given an impulse to trade, a stimulus to production, and opened new fields to enterprise, affecting in no small degree a large portion of the Union. It is a fact, that a large number of the citizens of southern Illinois have for many years occupied and improved portions of the public lands, without procuring any title from the Government, and without the fear of having their possessions disturbed. These lands being in sparsely-settled sections, and inaccessibly situated, were a hard bargain *EVEN* to the settler, and failed to excite the cupidity of the speculator. But now that this road has been projected, they are becoming anxious about their titles, are asserting their preëmptions, and thousands are anxiously waiting, with their hard dollars, or warrants laid by, to take up the reserved lands within the thirty-mile strip reserved from sale the moment they are brought into market. And yet not a spade of earth has been removed on the road; but these lands will now, in bare expectancy of its completion, readily yield the \$2 50 per acre, and thus realize to the Government every dollar she asked for the whole at a period much earlier than she could have realized the same without the grant. If the gentleman from Maine [Mr. FULLER] is right, they are, or soon will be, worth \$10 per acre. What, then, has the Government lost?

THE ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL.

The gentleman from New York [Mr. JENKINS] has asserted, (I know not upon what authority,) that the grant of alternate sections of lands to the State of Illinois, to aid in the construction of her canal, has resulted in great injury to that State. It is easy to show that the construction of this great work has had an immense effect in promoting the settlement of the public lands and the

prosperity of the State of Illinois. To show its influence upon the commerce and prosperity of northern Illinois, it is only necessary to call the attention of the committee to some of the statistics of the commerce and growth of the city of Chicago, situated at its terminus on Lake Michigan. In the year 1847, before the completion of the canal, the imports and exports of the city were only \$4,500,000; while in the year 1848, the first year after its completion, they amounted to \$20,000,000. The shipments of corn from the port of Chicago in the year 1847, were 67,305 bushels; in 1848, 550,460 bushels; and in 1851, 3,221,137 bushels; and of this amount, 2,235,362 bushels were received into Chicago by way of the canal. The lumber trade of the city doubled in a single year after the completion of the canal. So immense is this trade, that considerably over 100,000 tons of lumber are annually transported on the canal, and down the Illinois river into the interior of the State—the evidences of which, as remarked by the Chicago Tribune, may be seen in the transformation of the rude log-cabin to the elegant mansion, and in the erection of commodious church edifices and comfortable school-houses, and in a great variety of valuable and extensive improvements.

General Cass said in the Senate Chamber in 1848, "It is now twenty-five years ago that I sat 'all night in a canoe at the head of a pond at Chicago, there being no human habitation in 'which we could obtain shelter from the mouth of 'the Illinois to the mouth of the Chicago river.'" And yet, sir, Chicago is now an important city—the second city of the lakes. Look at its wonderful growth. Its population in the year 1840 was 4,479; in 1848, 20,023; and now, in 1852, it is 40,000. And hence, sir, her destiny is onward to her proud elevation as empress of the lakes, the great commercial emporium into whose commission houses shall pour one third of the commerce of the Union—a mighty city, rivaling ancient Carthage in her pride of power. And since the period referred to by General Cass, the country stretching from the mouth of the Chicago to the mouth of the Illinois river—a distance of four hundred miles—has made rapid advancement, and has now a better foundation for solid and durable prosperity than any portion of the American Union of equal extent.

In the year 1831, I first ascended the Illinois river. The whole commerce of the river was then carried on by some four or five old steamboats, which being unsafe for the dangerous navigation of the Mississippi river, were transferred to this river, whose current is gentle, and in good stages of water perhaps the best navigable stream in the world. But now, sir, from fifteen to twenty-five medium-sized steamers ply weekly between St. Louis and Lasalle, the western terminus of the canal, a distance of three hundred and twenty miles, laden with ponderous cargoes of merchandise, produce, and lumber, and thronged with thousands of travelers in pursuit of business or pleasure on their routes South, by way of the Mississippi, or to the new States and Territories of the Northwest by way of Galena, or by way of the Northern lakes and railway routes to the Eastern cities.

ILLINOIS RIVER.

It will surprise many to learn, that since the con-

struction of the canal, the transportation and travel on the Illinois river is greater than that on either the upper Mississippi or Missouri rivers. In the year 1851, there was imported into the city of St. Louis from the Illinois river 385,267 bushels more of wheat than from the Missouri river, and 215,277 bushels more than from the upper Mississippi. The difference in the article of corn is still greater. In the year 1850, there were seven hundred and eighty-eight arrivals of steamboats at the city of St. Louis from the Illinois river, and in 1851, six hundred and thirty-four; and in the two years, the arrivals from the Illinois river were one hundred and forty-eight more than from the Missouri, seven hundred and thirty-one more than from the upper Mississippi, four hundred and seventy-two more than from the Ohio, and six hundred and ninety-two more than from New Orleans. And, moreover, one half of the tonnage on the Illinois river finds its outlet north by way of Chicago, instead of south by way of St. Louis. Of the three million bushels of corn transported on the river, two millions seek its Eastern market by way of the canal and the lakes. An estimate furnished me by Captain A. B. Dewit, one of the oldest and most experienced navigators of that stream, shows that about 1,160,000 tons of produce, 820,000 tons of merchandise, and three hundred tons of lumber and salt are annually transported on this river by means of steamboats and canal boats.

While on this subject, it may be proper for me to remark, that from three to five months in the year the navigation of this river is obstructed by bars and flats, producing great delay, expense, and losses, preventing access to market, and affecting vast and important interests connected with the commerce of the river. There are twenty-eight bars or flats between LaSalle and the mouth of the river, composed, some of them of sand, and others of mud, which could be easily removed by dredging, at an expense most inconsiderable when compared with expenses incurred for removing obstructions in harbors for the benefit of foreign commerce; and when we consider that this stream is a very important link in the chain of national intercommunication which extends from the Atlantic to New Orleans and Mobile, on the Gulf of Mexico, it is of the highest national importance that these obstructions should be removed. Congress, by special enactment, once declared this stream a national highway; and it is as much entitled to the claim of nationality as the Mississippi itself; for it is, for the purposes of commerce, a direct extension of that very river, to meet the mighty northern thoroughfare extending by railway and the lakes, to the Atlantic ocean.

But, sir, the traveler along the canal not only sees a new and flourishing commerce, but he sees another object dearer to the patriot's heart. He sees every canal boat and steamer thronged with travelers, citizens from every portion of our common country. Here he finds the Western man, the Southern man, and, of course, "Brother Jonathan," expressing their astonishment at the magic and wonderful growth of that Western world of ours, discussing stocks, finance, railroads, trade, agriculture, corn, cotton, and *codfish*; the compromise, secession, slavery, and, what is better, learning from each other that there is no good reason for the local animosities which have heretofore existed and exhibited themselves in alarming as-

pects, threatening to jar the pillars of the Union and which, happily, the contact and collisions of modern commerce and business intercourse are fast wearing away.

Mr. Chairman, I feel like complimenting the honorable gentleman from South Carolina [Mr. ORR] for his lucid and eloquent speech in behalf of the Missouri roads; and it is not for his eloquence alone I thank him, but for his magnanimity. That gentleman well knew that these roads did not point to the South, but to the East; and that, while the South would enjoy no direct benefit from their construction, they would pour the rich treasures of a new and valuable commerce into the commission houses of the Eastern cities. Yet, sir, he did not pursue the illiberal policy of opposing grants for these roads, because calculated to benefit the East more directly than the South. I will say to that honorable gentleman, I trust the day is not far distant when, by means of the Illinois and Alabama road, we can supply the South with the productions of our Western farms, and receive in exchange the rice, cotton, and sugar of the South; when the citizen of the South, flying from the heat of a Southern sun, shall find a pleasant summer's retreat in our beautiful groves and prairies of the West; and I tell that gentleman, if the halcyon day predicted by my friend from Missouri [Mr. MILLER] shall ever come, when the young men of the South shall intermarry *with our* beautiful daughters of the prairie, it will not be long till all their notions of secession and disunion will be blown *sky high*. A union of the descendants of Sumter and Marion with those of Boone and the Western pioneer, would be a union indeed, and, I think, would be "preserved for the sake of the Union."

GRANTS FOR RAILROADS.

Mr. Chairman, I do insist we have a right to complain of the old States, because they refuse to help us when they can do so without injuring themselves. We propose to give them all they ask for the lands. If we build the roads, the Government gets \$2 50 per acre for the reserved alternate sections, which is all it asks for the whole. If we do not build the roads, we get none of the lands—they revert to the Government.

The argument is, that the lands belong to all the States—that they are a common fund. I admit it. We do not propose to diminish the common fund. Then is it not illiberal in the Representatives of the old States to withhold from us a positive benefit when they lose nothing? The public lands, you say, are common property. Let us see what there is in this argument. Suppose that a custom-house was needed in New York, or that some obstruction in the harbor of that city required to be removed, and the gentleman from New York should bring forward a bill appropriating money out of the Treasury, and I should say to him, "Sir, you must not take the money in the Treasury; it is common property, and belongs to the people of all the States, and you must not appropriate it to these objects, unless in the same act of appropriation you give to the State of Illinois an equal amount for some object she may have in view." Why, if we can make no appropriations unless they confer equal benefit on all the States, then we can make none at all. The argument that, being common property, the public lands cannot, therefore, be appropriated to great objects of pub-

lic utility, because they happen to lie in a particular section, is an argument which, in the present case, may pander to the cupidity of the Representatives of the old States, and to their jealousy of the West; but it is not very creditable to the schools and colleges in which they were taught the principles of logic.

There are paramount reasons why the Government should make these grants. First, as a great landholder; the Government, in the management of its property, ought to exercise, as far as is practicable, the same prudence and foresight which an individual under similar circumstances would. An individual owning large tracts of forest or prairie land, remote from settlement and market, and valueless, would readily sell, or even give away, a portion of said lands, to increase the value of the residue; and especially, if by so doing he could make that residue yield in a short time more than the whole would in its unimproved condition.

Second, as a measure of economy, to hasten the sales of the public lands, and thus at the earliest period enable the Government to dispense with the expensive machinery of land offices and other disbursements incurred in the sale of said lands.

The sale of the public lands cannot be more effectually promoted than by opening roads through them. Take the route from Burlington to Lafayette, or from Springfield to Terre Haute, portions of which run through large bodies of the public lands—prairies extensive and untenanted, and distant from market—lands not worth Government price. Suppose that by an Almighty fiat, a river straight as an arrow, unobstructed by snags or bars, and navigable for steamers of the largest class at all seasons of the year, should be run through those beautiful and productive lands: how long would it be before the Government would sell every acre within a day's travel of that stream? How long before commerce would flap her thousand sails upon that river? How long before its shores would resound with the roar of steam and the rattle of machinery? How long before its banks would teem with smiling villages, and its broad acres bend beneath fields of waving green, and the ripened harvest? Well, sir, the railroad will produce the same results; yea, for all the purposes of commerce, speed, and safety, the railroad surpasses the river.

CLAIMS OF THE WEST.

The gentleman from New York [Mr. BENNETT] in his speech says:

"In truth, it is a kind of a grab game, where each of the new States gets all it can—the most selfish and clamorous taking the largest share—while more than half of the States, and two thirds of the population, are mere spectators to the skill and rapacity which the twelve land States display in taking the public lands."

Rapacity!—This is a term applied to barbarians and robbers. Sir, this comes well from the modest State of New York. If there is anything that ever will keep that State in the back ground, it is her wonderful modesty. She never asks for anything. She never gets anything. She is languishing to death for want of some appropriations out of the Federal Treasury. Now, sir, to be serious, I do not complain of New York. I do not complain of what she has got. As a citizen of this nation, I am proud of the Empire State. I glory in her prosperity, in the Napoleon-like energies of her peo-

ple, and in that daring enterprise of her merchants and tradesmen which has sent our flag into every port, and planted the feet of our sailors on every island of the sea; and I hope, sir, that the liberal hand of the Government will ever be extended to her in promoting our commerce with foreign nations; but, sir, as a Western man, I hurl back the charge of rapacity made against us for asking grants of worthless wild lands to enable us to get to her markets, and to swell the sails of her commerce.

Mr. Chairman, much consideration is due to the new States. The old States came into the Union proprietors of all the public lands within their limits. Upon the separation of the Colonies from the mother country, they succeeded to the right of eminent domain, which, up to that time, had existed in the Crown. They have received the proceeds of these lands into their State treasuries, and they have been disbursed for the benefit of their citizens. But not so with the new States. In most of them the General Government is, to this day, the proprietor of the larger portion of the lands within their limits. These States, before their admission into the Union, were required to subscribe to the conditions contained in the ordinance of 1787—"never to interfere with the primary disposal of the soil;" and "to impose no tax on land the property of the United States;" and in the acts of their admission into the Union as States, they were required to subscribe to another condition—"that every tract of land sold by 'the United States, after the day of their admission, should remain exempt from any tax for 'State, county, township, or any purpose whatever, for the term of five years from and after the 'day of sale.'" The first condition is still in force, and the latter remained in force until January, 1847, when Congress passed an act authorizing the States admitted into the Union prior to the 24th day of April, 1820, to tax the lands from the day of sale. It is true, the United States gave the sixteenth section; a township for a seminary of learning; the saline lands, and two fifths of the five per cent. of the proceeds of the public lands to the State of Illinois in exchange for this immunity from taxation. But it is very easy to show that the State has lost several millions of dollars more by this surrender of her sovereign right to tax the lands than all she has obtained from the concessions of the Government in consideration for this immunity.

But, again: there is an equitable claim which entitles the new States to some consideration. The citizens of the new States have reclaimed the public lands from the wilderness, and given them all the value they possess. The actual settler, by his labor and cultivation of the one hundred and sixty acres he buys from the Government, gives value to and brings into market the adjacent lands. Every furrow made by his plow, every road he opens, every bridge he builds, and every house he erects, adds value to the adjacent Government lands; and in Illinois, and in most of the new States, the system of taxation being on the *ad valorem* principle, the more he improves his lands the higher are his taxes; but the General Government being the largest proprietor, derives the full benefit of these accessions of value, but pays no taxes.

The reclamation of that vast territory west of

the Alleghanies from the savage and the solitude of the wilderness, is a high compliment to the adventurous spirit of the pioneer, whose dauntless courage has impelled him to encounter all the vicissitudes of a frontier life, and to lay broad and deep the foundation of great commonwealths in these wild forests and untenanted prairies. The settlement of the West is the grandest achievement of the age. An half century discloses a magnificent empire, and the establishment of the institutions of law, religion, and liberty on that territory which, at the beginning of the Government, had been consigned by prophecy as the perpetual domain of the savage.

And what has the Government done? It is true, she has negotiated treaties with the Indians, but by her *Indian* policy she has hedged up the path of the pioneer from the frontiers of Virginia at each successive advance to the Rocky mountains by walls of wild Indians, who stand ready on the border-line with the implements of death to massacre him, his wife, and children. By her *land policy* she has wrung from the hard earnings of the pioneer \$1 25 per acre for redeeming her territory from savage occupation, and making farms for her in the wilderness—that \$1 25 to be drawn into the abyss of the Treasury, to be expended anywhere else than in the region of its acquisition. The poor immigrant—the actual settler has followed, with his axe in one hand and his gun in the other, close on to the receding council-fire of the Indian, leaving behind him all the conveniences of society—destitute of schools and churches—dwelling in rude log cabins, and exposed to every conceivable danger and privation. He has made your lands valuable, and paid you \$1 25 per acre for them, which, instead of finding its way into the State Treasury to be disbursed among these settlers, has gone into the United States Treasury, to be expended for the benefit of foreign commerce. All your boasted liberality—all your “I would be generous to the new States,” amounts to this, that out of your thousands of millions of acres of public lands, you have granted to the land States, for the purposes of internal improvements, only 11,500,395 acres.

RIVERS AND HARBORS.

Sir, the rivers and harbors of the West must remain unimproved; her three hundred millions of commerce and her ten millions of people must have no protection; the lives and property of her citizens must be sacrificed for the want of small appropriations to remove the snags and bars from her rivers; her vast stores of agricultural productions must rot in her barns for the want of small portions of the public domain in aiding her to get them to market; and this, too, when it is incontrovertibly proven that the Government receives more immediate benefits from the grants than the States themselves.

From statistics taken by direction of the Treasury Department, it appears that, in the year 1851, 67 vessels were lost on the inland lakes and rivers, 35 by tempest, and 32 by snags; 628 lives were lost during that year, and the total value of property destroyed was near two millions of dollars. I noticed, the other day, a letter of a St. Louis insurance company to pilots on the Mississippi river, directing them to avoid a certain snag in the channel of that stream, and stating that three fine

steamers had been sunk by striking that same snag, at a sacrifice of \$40,000. Now, if there was any obstruction in any harbor on the sea-board, how long would it be before Congress would make an appropriation for its removal, and who would vote for it more cheerfully than Representatives from the West? On my way to this city, down the Illinois and Mississippi, and up the Ohio rivers, I saw scores of boats stationed on sand-bars, making ineffectual efforts to proceed on their journeys. The boat on which I was a passenger, was detained twenty-four hours at the mouth of the Cumberland river. Who, sir, is responsible for these obstructions to commerce, expensive delays, and immense sacrifices of life and property? Let the party whose policy it has been to vote down and veto every river and harbor bill, answer? Why, sir, while we have been discussing the relative claims of “Young Foggy” [Mr. DOUGLAS] and “Old Foggy,” [General CASS,] we could have passed a river and harbor bill, which would have sent a gladsome thrill of joy throughout the mighty Valley of the Mississippi. A small appropriation—no burden on the Treasury—an amount we would never miss, would clear out the snags and deepen the channels of our Western rivers; would rouse the young West, stimulate her enterprise, and advance her prosperity!

There can be no question as to the obligation which rests upon Congress to make these appropriations. The same clause of the Constitution which confers upon her the power to protect life and property upon the ocean, confers power to protect life and property upon the lakes and rivers. Congress voluntarily assumed this obligation in the passage of the ordinance of 1787, which says:

“The navigable waters leading into the Mississippi and St. Lawrence, and the carrying places between them, shall be common highways, and forever free to all of the citizens of the United States, without any tax, impost, or duty therefor.”

Congress having thus declared these rivers to be *common highways* for all the States, and deprived the States of any power to improve the same by impost, tonnage duties, or other tax, she has taken upon herself the irrevocable obligation to improve them, and make them in truth “*common highways*” for the citizens of all the States. There is no power in the States to make these improvements. If it is replied that the States can do it with the consent of Congress, then I rejoin *that to do it with consent is not power*, it is permission. And what State will undertake the enterprise? “What is everybody’s business is nobody’s.” What States will undertake, out of the moneys in their treasuries, to make improvements in which all the States have a common interest, and ought to contribute their common share?

Is this Government not partial in its appropriations? The golden regions of California are scarcely in the Union, before millions are drawn from the Treasury to connect New York and San Francisco by ocean steamers. The Eastern emigrant, after a speedy journey in a floating palace, finds himself safely harbored in the bay of San Francisco, while the Western emigrant, in his ox wagon, must pursue his weary and perilous pilgrimage across mountains and wild deserts, and fight his way through hordes of savages, who infest his path at every step of his advance. For one third of the money expended for steamers, the

Government could open a national road between the frontiers of Missouri and San Francisco, establish the necessary military posts, and station companies of soldiers within convenient distances all along the route. But the cries of distress along that route, and the murders and depredations committed, are far below the notice of Congress.

THE WEST—EXTENT AND RESOURCES.

It is time our brethren of the East had informed themselves of the extent and resources of the West. If they had, they would not look upon her States either "as spoiled children asking for what they were not entitled," or as Goths and Vandals, "seeking every opportunity to pillage the Treasury." To judge from the legislation of Congress, one would infer that they look upon the mighty Mississippi and all its tributaries as not entitled to as much consideration as the most inconsiderable harbor on the sea-board. If they would inform themselves, they would find, as the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CAMPBELL] says, that "we had *some country, and some people there.*" Take your stand at the mouth of the Missouri, and look up to its source, 3,217 miles, up the Illinois 400 miles, the Ohio 1,000 miles, and the mighty Mississippi, the great trunk of all, as she sweeps her turbid waters 3,500 miles, from her headland home in the wilderness to the Gulf—traverse the valleys of the Wabash, the Kaskaskia, the Rock, the Iowa, the Des Moines, the Wisconsin, the St. Peters, and you will find there is some *territory* there. An accurate historian of the West, the Rev. Mr. Peck, informs us that, "The Mississippi and Ohio, and 'their tributary waters, form an inland navigation 'exceeding twenty thousand miles, for various 'classes of boats, during two thirds of the year, 'to the point of junction at Cairo; from thence to 'New Orleans the river is navigable for the whole 'year for boats of the largest class.'" There are broad valleys there; mighty lakes and rivers, and beautiful prairies; mines of inexhaustible wealth; mountains of iron; vast beds of lead, zinc, and copper, and "coal enough to keep the hearth fires of the world bright for a thousand centuries." But, sir, there is also there, the sure and durable element of wealth, the *soil*, a rich and productive soil—a soil producing, with little labor, and in great abundance, those staple articles which promote the subsistence, as well as constitute the commerce of the world. Agriculture produces the raw material, commerce distributes it, manufactures prepare it for use. But, sir, the latter depend on the former. Agriculture is the only unfailing basis of wealth. The proudest emporiums are liable to decay by the opening of new ways or the diversions of the channels of trade; but these channels of trade, go where they will, they depend for their life-blood upon the productions of agriculture.

"While trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
And ocean sweeps the labored mole away,
This self-dependent power shall time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky."

The West is progressing rapidly in commercial prosperity. In the year 1811 the first steam-boat was launched on our western waters. On the 1st day of July, 1851, there were on the inland lakes and rivers seven hundred and sixty-five steam-boats, with an average tonnage of 204,613, and carrying 6,000,000 of passengers, and with an aggregate annual commerce of \$300,000,000, exceed-

ing the whole amount of our commerce with foreign nations.

To show the rapid advance and relative position of the West in the construction of railroads, I have gleaned the following statistics from a table published by the Railway Times:

In the United States.

Total number of railroads.....	337
Number of miles in operation.....	11,565
Number of miles in course of construction...	11,228
Cost of roads completed.....	\$335,150,848
Average cost per mile.....	\$28,979

In the Valley of the Mississippi.

Total number of railroads.....	103
Miles in operation.....	2,826
Miles in course of construction.....	7,506
Cost of roads completed.....	\$50,531,435
Cost per mile.....	\$17,845

In Illinois.

Total number of roads.....	18
Miles in operation.....	246
In course of construction.....	2,246

Thus it appears that the West has already one third as many roads as all the States, and nearly three fourths of all the roads in the course of construction in the whole Union.

Mr. Chairman, the population of the Valley of the Mississippi already constitutes more than one third of the entire population of the Union. And, sir, the time is not distant when the seat of empire, the strong-hold of numerical power, will be west of the Alleghanies. The handwriting is on the wall. It is *manifest destiny*, sir. It is written on the signs of the times in clear, fresh, and unmistakable lines. And then, sir, her Representatives will stand on this floor clothed with the power to *demand*, and not to beg, like crouching mendicants, for justice. But, sir, when her voice shall be potential here, I believe, and trust, it will not be felt in partiality or oppression; but with a high and patriotic regard for the interests of the whole country, she will sympathize with, and cheerfully coöperate in, every measure for the common prosperity, without regard to section or locality. She will then try and establish the proposition, that three hundred millions of commerce on the lakes and rivers is entitled to protection, as well as the same amount on the ocean; and that the life of a man on the Mississippi is worth at least one fifth part of the life of a man on the Atlantic.

What has the West done? Has she not contributed her equal share to the support of the Government? Has she not cheerfully voted every appropriation for the support of the Army, Navy—for the protection of our foreign commerce—without inquiring what particular sections it was most to benefit? And when the country has required the services of its citizen soldiery, who has sought the field with more alacrity? Let the history of the country answer. The West can point to many a battle-field in the war of 1812, and in the Mexican war, which will stand forever as the imperishable monuments of the prowess of her sons. And yet, sir, they claim only, in common with their countrymen everywhere, to have done their duty, and nothing more; and they ask only equal consideration at the hands of this Government.

THE ROADS THROUGH ILLINOIS.

Mr. Chairman, I have not time to present the claims of the various roads for which grants have been asked, and which pass through the State of Illinois. The Burlington and Lafayette road, the

extension of the Alton and Sangamon road to Bloomington, connecting St. Louis and Chicago by the most direct line, and the Cincinnati and St. Louis road are most important thoroughfares; and when these measures come up, I will, if I can get the floor, present their claims to the best of my ability. I would not have the committee infer that we expect to get grants for all the roads asked for, for, as Mr. DOUGLAS said in the Senate, this is out of the question. We, of course, will expect the House to select from all the roads brought before it such as present the strongest claims to the consideration of Congress. As the bill introduced by my friend from Indiana [Mr. DAVIS] will probably first come up for consideration, I will say a few words as to the route it proposes. This is an extension of the Hannibal and St. Joseph road eastward to Terre Haute. From the Mississippi to the Illinois rivers a road is now in process of construction. From the Illinois river to Springfield a road has been in operation for several years. It is now proposed to grant alternate sections of the public lands for six miles on each side of the road, to extend it to Terre Haute, a distance of one hundred miles. From Terre Haute to Indianapolis a road is in operation, and thence to Columbus a road is in process of construction, and from this point a choice of routes can be shortly had to any of the Eastern cities. The importance of this road can be seen at a glance. St. Joseph, Quincy, Springfield, Indianapolis, Columbus, and Philadelphia are all on the parallel of latitude forty, running through the geographical center of all these States, equidistant from the lakes on the north and the rivers on the south, through the finest agricultural districts in the world; it is the short, central, and convenient route of the cities of the East to the Mississippi and the Missouri, and at a future day, to the Pacific ocean. I verily believe that this is the route which is destined to bear on its long lines that majestic procession of the commerce of the continents of Europe, America, and Asia. Perhaps not a century will elapse before the citizens of Springfield, Illinois, will see in the same train of cars the merchant of Liverpool, New York, San Francisco, and Peking; and that trade which built up Babylon and enriched Holland, and which has been the theme of British eloquence for centuries, will find its natural channel over the Rocky Mountains and the prairies of the West.

Mr. Chairman, I shall conclude what I have to say by expressing the hope that in our legislation upon the public lands we will not be governed by the narrow considerations of sectional jealousy. Are the railroads for which we ask grants, for the benefit alone of any particular section? Do they not open new and profitable markets for your cities? Are they not outlets for your merchandise and the fabrics of your manufactories? And do they not bring the productions of the mighty West, cheapened and in greater abundance to your doors? Do they not freight your own roads and canals, build up your cities, and laden your ships with the cargoes of valuable commerce? A railroad in Illinois, like a light-house on the sea-coast, is the common property of the nation. Shall we adopt the policy that we will pass no measure unless it confers equal benefits on every section of the country? Then, sir, we can pass none. Then, sir, stop all appropriations for cus-

tom-houses, ocean steamers, and coast surveys; for these add to your wealth, these make your merchant princes, these swell the sails of your commerce, while we share their benefits in an indirect and incidental way only. But I trust, Mr. Chairman, the West will never oppose an appropriation for the "general welfare or common defense," because the locality of that appropriation may receive especial advantage from it. Whatever benefits the East or South is our benefit—if not for our benefit, it is for the nation, and that's enough. The ocean steamer that plows the deep, it is enough for us that she bears aloft our stars and stripes, and displays to the world the commerce, power, and renown of our country. It is enough for us that she bears the trident of the seas, and outstrips the power

"Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze."

Away, then, sir, forever away with arguments like those of the gentleman from New York, [Mr. BENNETT,] addressed to our sectional prejudices and local cupidity. We have one country; our interests are one, our history is one; our destiny is the same—a glorious destiny of free and sovereign States to unexampled power and renown. The same flag that flashes its stars to the sun on the banks of the Hudson and Potomac is hailed by millions of rejoicing freemen on the banks of the Mississippi and the Columbia.

Mr. Chairman, I confess I was delighted the other day at the vivid description given by the gentleman from New York [Mr. BROOKS] of the extent of our newly-acquired possessions, and the vast area of our country. Within the last five years three new States have been added to the Union, and there is the territory at the head of the Missouri and the Arkansas, the Territories of Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, and Oregon—and the vision of an ocean-bound Republic is now a reality. Sir, what a mighty theater for American enterprise! What a mighty course for the race of democratic liberty!

The gentleman from New York informed us that we had upon the frontiers an army of 12,311 men, 118 military posts, and 6,800 miles of frontier requiring our protection. Now, sir, who can doubt that railroads, enabling us to concentrate at given points our Army and munitions of war at the shortest notice, will be a more reliable and surer defense than thousands of military posts and fortifications? And, sir, when we have united the Atlantic and the Mississippi, our oceans, lakes, and rivers, by these iron bands of commerce, we shall have stronger and more impregnable bonds of union "than all the constitutions which man ever formed." This, sir, will be a new era—an era, not only of commerce, which is an exchange of commodities, but also of the exchange of ideas, the rapid transmission of thought—the birth of a literature commensurate with this mighty theater of action—a progression in science, art, and political economy and diplomacy *pari passu* with this new power of locomotion. Wherever the iron horse travels, he will carry, not only the rich productions of our soil, but our laws, our liberty, and our religion. Flying over the rivers and mountains and wild deserts, it will realize the bright vision of Isaiah: "The valleys shall be exalted, the mountains laid low, and straight in the desert, shall be made a highway for our God."

It is already our boast as a nation, sir, that we enjoy more of liberty, a more universal diffusion of knowledge, and a more exalted national character than any nation on the globe. But the striking feature of the American character is its enterprise—an enterprise that knows no obstacles, counts no costs, fears no dangers, triumphs over all obstacles. Look at California—three thousand miles away in the wild deserts, and mountains and savages between. And yet, sir, a young empire is there—a sovereign State, she has her Representative on this floor, who delights us with his eloquence; and who, to quote my friend from Kentucky, [Mr. BRECKINRIDGE,] is ready to turn the world upside down with his brilliant notions of “young fogysm,” “young America,” and “manifest destiny.”

But, sir, the most felicitous thought is now, that the fears of disunion growing out of the increased extension of territory no longer alarms the patriot. It will be no matter how far Charleston is from New York when, sir, they can have constant communication with each other in a few days. Rome, by her military powers, spread her empire

over the world; and her eagles winged their triumphant flight over conquered provinces; but these provinces were beyond the reach of the Roman lawgiver. The eloquence of Cicero thundered in the forum, but it reached no further than the ears of the conscript fathers and the Roman populace. But not so with us, when the message of the President can be read in the most distant State on the day of its delivery. Not so with us, when we travel by steam, print by electricity, and talk by lightning.

Then, sir, with the proper application of the resources that belong to us, and a faithful development of the true principles of our freedom, we may look forward, fearless of disunion, to the magnificent destiny which awaits us,—a nation renowned in arts and arms, her institutions of benevolence and public works the wonder of the world—her republican example the beacon light to light up the world to freedom!

Mr. Chairman, I see that my time is about expired, and I close by thanking the committee for the attention it has accorded me to what I have offered for its consideration.



